

Your Baby Is Unique

Your baby won't fit everything you read or hear about the "average" baby or your friends' babies. Your baby will have his or her own way of doing things.

Remember that babies aren't in a race. They all grow and learn to do new things at their own pace.

If you have questions or concerns, talk to your health care provider.



Growth during the first 6 months is more rapid than any other time.

Your Baby Will Grow Quickly

- In the first few days after birth, babies lose 6–12 ounces.
- After about 5 days, babies begin to gain weight.
- Growth during the first 6 months is more rapid than any other time.
- At 5–6 months, babies weigh about twice as much as at birth.

How Your Baby Will Change

Newborns Change Quickly

Give your baby interesting things to look at.

- At a few days old, a baby can focus his or her eyes on something held up close.
- By 1 month, a baby can focus on a person's face.
- By 3 months, a baby can follow an object held 6–10 inches above the face with his or her eyes.

Your baby will get stronger every month.

- By 1 month, babies can lift the head for a short time while lying on the tummy.
- By 3 months, babies can lift the head and hold it up.
- A newborn sleeps with legs curled up. By 3 months, a baby can lie flat with the legs extended.

All the sounds your baby makes build the foundation for talking.

- New babies let you know their needs by crying.
- By 2 months, babies begin to make other sounds too.
- By 3 months, babies are usually able to laugh or squeal.
- Talk to your baby often and respond to his or her sounds.

Smiling: The First Sign of Social Development

- The first sign that a baby is becoming social is a smile.
- Babies quickly learn that smiling gets a response. They smile to get attention.
- Babies can't smile until they're ready. Most babies begin to smile sometime during their second month.



Your baby will smile sooner if talked to, played with and cuddled.

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You're a Parent!

Congratulations! You've begun one of life's most important jobs. You're ready to give your baby a good start in life.

Being a parent causes many strong feelings:

- Most of the time you'll feel happy and proud. You may be amazed at how much love you feel for your baby.
- At other times, you may feel angry that your baby won't stop crying. You may worry about how you're doing as a parent. Your new responsibilities may feel scary.

All these feelings are normal.

Many new parents find it helps to talk with other parents. Ask your health care provider about a group for new parents.

How Do You Decide What's Best?

When you're a new parent you may get lots of advice. One person may tell you one thing, someone else may tell you the exact opposite.

Here's one way to make decisions about your baby:

- First, figure out what your choices are.
- Then get information and think about what would happen with each choice.
- Talk with people you trust.
- Make the choice you feel is right for you and your baby. You can always change your decision later if you need to.

Should I Call the Doctor?

Your baby's fussiness may be a sign of an illness.

- Ask your health care provider to teach you how to take your baby's temperature and what kind of thermometer to use.
- Learn when you should call for advice.
- Call your health care provider if your baby is coughing, has a stuffy nose or is rubbing his or her ears.

Newborn Tips



Your care and love will give your baby a good start in life.



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Breast . . . or . . . Bottle?

Trust your feelings about feeding your baby.
Decide what will work best for you.

Health care providers think breast milk is best.

- Babies are almost never allergic to breast milk.
- Breast milk gives a baby the mother's immunities. Breastfed babies aren't sick as much.
- Breastfeeding helps develop the muscles in the baby's mouth.
- Many mothers find it easier to breastfeed than to fix formula. And, breastfeeding is free!

How often should I breastfeed?

- A breastfed newborn eats every 2–3 hours. Let your baby's hunger tell you how often to breastfeed.
- Breastfeed as soon as possible after birth. Breastfeeding helps the uterus shrink back to normal size.
- The more your baby feeds, the more milk your breasts produce.

Will my diet affect my milk?

- Your body needs lots of fluids to make milk. Drink juice, milk or water every time you nurse.
- Whatever you eat and drink your baby eats and drinks, too. Tobacco, alcohol or other drugs can all affect your baby through your milk.

What's the best way to breastfeed?

- Make feeding times quiet times. Give your full attention to your baby. Being relaxed helps your breasts produce plenty of milk.
- Many mothers like to nurse lying down. Others prefer a comfortable chair with support for the arm holding the baby.

Formula also meets a baby's nutritional needs.

- Formula fills the baby up more quickly and lasts longer than breast milk. So the baby doesn't have to be fed as often.
- Many mothers enjoy the freedom that bottle feeding gives them.
- The baby's father, grandparents and older siblings can help feed the baby.
- Some mothers worry about having enough milk, or don't want to breastfeed in public. Bottle feeding can be less stressful for them.

How often should I bottle feed?

- A bottle-fed newborn eats about every 3–4 hours. At 3 months, a bottle-fed baby eats about 5 times a day.

What formula should I use?

- Ask your health care provider about the best formula.
- Make sure you understand how to prepare the formula and keep it free of germs. Follow the directions exactly and don't add extra water.
- Don't heat the bottle in a microwave. The formula can get too hot and burn your baby's mouth.

What's the best way to bottle feed?

- Find a quiet, comfortable place to feed your baby.
- Always hold your baby when giving a bottle. Never prop up a bottle. Your baby can choke. Propping the bottle can also cause frequent ear infections.

Coping with Crying

All newborn babies cry. Some cry a lot!
Your baby's telling you what he or she needs.

When your baby cries, ask yourself if he or she:

- Is hungry?
- Needs a clean diaper?
- Needs to be burped?
- Is too hot or too cold? (Check body temperature by feeling the back of the neck.)
- Is lonely or bored?
- Is tired?

When all these needs are taken care of, try to calm your baby in other ways.

Ways to Calm a Crying Baby

- Move the baby to a new spot with something new to look at.
- Give the baby something to listen to. Try singing a lullaby.
- Walk around with the baby. Often a walk outside quiets a crying baby.
- Your baby may need more sucking than he or she gets from feeding. Sometimes a pacifier calms a baby.
- Many babies just need to be close to someone. Rock the baby in a rocking chair, cradle, baby swing or stroller.
- Many parents find that riding in a car calms the baby. (Be sure your baby travels in a car seat.)

Sometimes, no matter what you do, your baby will keep crying. This often happens in the late afternoon when everyone is tired and a lot is going on.

If your baby seems to cry a lot:

- Remember that this won't last forever. Most babies outgrow intense crying by 3–4 months.
- Try to find some peace and quiet for yourself. A crying baby puts you under a lot of stress. Ask for help from other family members.
- Remember that it's not your fault. You're doing everything you can to meet your baby's needs.
- Be patient with your crying baby and yourself.



Sometimes rocking calms a baby.

What About Sleep?

Your baby will have his or her own sleep needs and patterns.

How much sleep will my baby need?

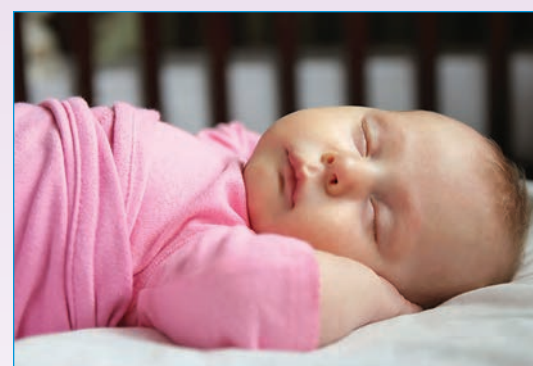
- During the first 3 months, most babies sleep 14–18 hours a day.
- A new baby may wake every few hours to eat.
- By 3 months, babies often have one longer wakeful time during the day.
- Don't expect your baby to fit into a sleep schedule for the first few weeks.
- Don't expect your baby to sleep all the time, and don't be worried when he or she doesn't.

Where should my baby sleep?

- Some parents keep the baby in their room so they can easily respond to cries.
- Others like having the baby in a separate room.
- Decide what works best for you.

How can I help my baby sleep better?

- When the baby wakes at night, keep the room dark and quiet. This will help you get him or her fed and back to sleep.
- Don't pick up the baby every time he or she makes a noise. Most babies make lots of sounds while they are sleeping.
- A newborn baby may feel more secure and sleep better if swaddled snugly.
- You don't have to keep the house quiet while the baby sleeps. A baby needs to learn to sleep through normal, everyday noises.



Newborns sleep a lot in the first few weeks.

Healthy and Safe

Well-baby care is an important part of raising a healthy baby.

First Checkup

- Before your baby is born, choose where you will get well-baby care. Be sure to keep all of your appointments.
- The baby's first checkup should be between 4 days and 2 weeks after birth.
- Your health care provider will measure, weigh and check the baby to see how he or she is growing.
- This is a good time to talk about any concerns. Find out when and how to call if you have a worry.

Immunizations

At 4–8 weeks your baby will get his or her first immunizations.

- Most babies have some reaction to the shots. Some have severe reactions.
- Ask your health care provider what to expect and how to comfort your baby.
- Keep careful records of all immunizations. You'll need these records when your child starts school.

Get Support

- Pay attention to your feelings.
- If you feel angry or frustrated by the crying, don't take it out on the baby. Find someone else to care for the baby and take some time for yourself.
- Talk with someone about your strong feelings.
- Get the help and support you need.

Safety in the Car

- Auto crashes kill and injure more children every year than all major childhood illnesses.
- Babies should always travel in a car seat, even on the trip home from the hospital.
- Make sure the car seat is strapped correctly into the back seat of the car, facing backwards.

Safety at Home

- Never leave a baby alone in the house, even for a few minutes.
- Never leave a baby alone on the changing table or in the bath. If the phone rings, take the baby with you or don't answer it.
- Be gentle. Shaking or playing rough can cause serious brain damage.

Safety in the Crib

- Put your baby to sleep on his or her back. It's the safest position.
- Don't put stuffed animals, pillows or plastic bags in the baby's bed. Make sure your baby sleeps on a firm surface with no pillows, comforters, quilts or crib bumpers. A baby can be suffocated by these things.

Put your baby to sleep on his or her back. It's the safest position.